

PARKS
ATLANTA
OPEN
SPACE *and*
GREENWAYS
DECEMBER 1993
PLAN



PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Overview Design guidelines are vital to every sound decision-making process regarding parks acquisition and development. Guidelines make it possible to: (1) evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities; (2) determine future needs; (3) establish priorities; (4) evaluate the effectiveness of proposed projects and, (5) aid neighborhoods in evaluating their own recreational needs so that they may support the City in fulfilling those needs in the most practical and efficient manner.

Decisions regarding open space and recreation development are based on several factors, including demographics, development patterns and a community's special interests and needs. These factors are constantly changing; only the guidelines remain constant from year to year. Each year the City makes decisions on park project priorities as part of the Comprehensive Development Plan review process.

Atlanta's first, and only other adopted, park standards were developed in 1968. These standards defined park classifications in terms of acreage, population served, and facilities, and were based on the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards. The 1968 standards have become outdated. For example, the 1968 standards do not address how security can be maximized, how parks support stable neighborhoods, or what surrounding uses are appropriate for parks. The new Park Design Guidelines are presented below and on the following pages.

Goal Create stable neighbors by developing parks that are safe, accessible and serve the neighborhood or community.

Park Security Objective Maximize park security and surrounding neighborhood stability.

Security and Neighborhood Stability Guidelines

Interior Visibility

Choose sites that do not have structures or features around the edges or in the site that block visibility into the park.

Elevation

Choose sites that are not consistently at high elevations or are not visible from surrounding areas. Elevations should generally be lower than or equal to the surrounding areas.

Park Design Guidelines

<i>Surrounding Visibility</i>	Ensure visibility into the park from surrounding homes and streets.
<i>Park Perimeter</i>	Ensure that adjacent streets are along a minimum of 50 percent of the park's perimeter and optimally along 100 percent of its perimeter. The City's safest parks are those that are completely visible to neighbors and police driving on surrounding streets.
<i>Adjacent Streets</i>	Develop all adjacent streets as through streets; dead end streets have less neighborhood traffic, are less visible, and are not as easy to patrol.
<i>Interior Streets</i>	Develop interior streets as dead end streets. Through streets give criminals a way to escape when security patrols arrive, thereby making criminals feel safer to conduct illicit activities.
<i>Surrounding Uses</i>	Surround the site with residential streets and development in neighborhoods or with office streets and development in commercial areas. Vacant land adjacent to a park decreases visibility into and security of the park.
<i>Surrounding Orientation</i>	Face surrounding residences or offices onto the park; avoid back yards abutting the park. Without exception, City parks with abutting backyards are screened from visibility by backyard fences, thereby decreasing park security.
<i>Common Ownership</i>	Locate community parks in areas that are common to the community and are not exclusive to one neighborhood within the intended service area.
<i>Cluster Facilities</i>	Cluster community facilities in community parks. Facilities are easier to secure when they are clustered together, thereby requiring fewer security personnel and less police patrol time.

Accessibility Objective Maximize accessibility of parks.

Proposed Accessibility Guidelines

<i>Walking</i>	Provide easy walking access for up to one half mile.
<i>Bicycles</i>	Make the park easily accessible by bicycle.
<i>MARTA</i>	Locate adjacent to a MARTA bus route whenever possible.
<i>Obstructions</i>	Locate away from obstructive features such as freeways, railroads and ravines that have no safe pedestrian and bike crossings and, as such, limit accessibility to the park.

Park Design Guidelines

Development Potential Objective Maximize the desired development potential.

Proposed Development Guidelines

Site Preparation

Choose new park sites that require relatively little site preparation in the proposed recreational facility building area.

Development Constraints

Choose park sites which have minimal unstable soils, polluted lakes or waterways, improperly prepared fill areas, or floodplains in or next to facility development areas. These could potentially damage proposed facilities and recreational areas.

Park Classification Objective Define the optimum acreage location and functions of each park class.

Regional Park Standards

Visibility

Surround site with local, arterial and collector streets.

Accessibility

Locate site where there is excellent MARTA rail or bus service to any proposed special facilities and events.

Regional Facility

Include or be adjacent to special facilities such as a museum, amphitheater, sports complex, zoo, golf course, or regionally important historic site.

Open Space

Provide a minimum of two-thirds open space, not including golf courses, roads or strip buffer areas, between activities and facilities.

Parking

Provide parking for users who live too far away to walk or bike to the park.

Regional Park Classification Criteria

Acreage -- 100+ (not including the special facility).

Acres per thousand population -- 5 +.

Population Served -- 20,000+

Service Area -- Atlanta and occasionally adjacent metropolitan areas.

Community Park Standards

Accessibility

Locate within a five minute drive to entire service area.

Visibility

Locate park adjacent to arterial and collector streets.

Community Facility

Include major recreation facilities such as lighted ball fields or a gymnasium.

Park Design Guidelines

Joint Use Locate adjacent to, and develop jointly with, a high school where possible.

Open Space Underdeveloped a minimum of one-third of the total open space.

Parking Provide adequate parking for daily users who cannot walk or bike.

Community Park Classification Criteria

Acreage -- 25 minimum (for low density areas) 50+ acres optimum.

Acres per thousand population -- 5 to 10+.

Population Served -- 12,000 to 20,000

Service Area -- One to two miles, no more than 5 minutes driving time.

Neighborhood Park Standards

Accessibility Provide walk-to facilities so that no parking or restrooms would be required.

Visibility Locate at an intersection of collector or neighborhood streets.

Joint Use Plan to be near or adjacent to an elementary school where possible so that recreational facilities can be shared.

Neighborhood Facilities Provide open space and recreational facilities for daytime use and the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Park Classification Criteria

Acreage -- 10 - 25+ acres.

Acres per thousand population -- N/A.

Population Served -- 5,000 to 8,000.

Service Area -- 1/2 mile.

Block Park Standards

Visibility Locate adjacent to an preferably on the corner of intersecting local streets.

Accessibility Ensure pedestrian access to the users within a two-block or one-eight mile walking distance.

Flexibility Design site that is flexible to changing needs.

Local Participation Enlist the support and participation of a local community group, business group, church, or other local organization.

Park Design Guidelines

Block Park Classification Criteria

Acreage -- Whatever is available, generally up to two acres.

Acreage per thousand -- N/A.

Population Served -- 500+.

Service Area -- one-eighth of a mile.

Garden Park Standards

<i>Visibility</i>	Locate in focal point area or adjacent to highly visible street corner.
<i>Accessibility</i>	Provide sidewalks within a 4 block or one-half mile distance.
<i>Passive Facilities</i>	Does not include active recreation facilities.
<i>Location</i>	Located in commercial areas or as a "garden spot" in neighborhood areas.
<i>Multi-use</i>	May be used for sculpture, fountains, small special events or outdoor picnicking. This may include public toilets.

Garden Park Classification Criteria

Acreage -- Maximum of two acres.

Acreage per thousand -- N/A.

Population Served -- 500+.

Service Area -- one-eighth of a mile.

Conservation Park Standards

<i>Visibility</i>	Ensure high visibility from surrounding streets and homes.
<i>Function</i>	Ensure that the primary function of the park is the conservation of a natural area.
<i>Accessibility</i>	Locate site on any type of street.
<i>Minimum Development</i>	Recreational facilities are not included.

Conservation Park Classification Criteria

Classification based solely on function as a small, undeveloped natural conservation area.

Nature Preserve Standards

<i>Visibility</i>	Locate site adjacent to arterial streets where possible.
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Park Design Guidelines

<i>Accessibility</i>	Provide adequate parking.
<i>Natural Resources</i>	Select an area with unique resources.
<i>Function</i>	Ensure that conservation and preservation are the primary functions.
<i>Minimum Development</i>	Develop minimally; emphasize natural setting.

Nature Preserve Classification Criteria

Acreage -- 25+, 100+ optimum

Acreage per thousand --2+ acres

Service Area --5,000+

Population Served -- All or part of the City and some surrounding metropolitan areas.

Greenway Standards

<i>Accessibility</i>	Provide access to adjacent parks and other destination points.
<i>Linkage</i>	Link parks, neighborhoods, work places, MARTA stations, schools and other public facilities.
<i>Resource Protection</i>	Protect historic, cultural and natural resources within the corridor.
<i>Facilities</i>	Include recreational trails, pocket parks and landscaping whenever feasible.
<i>Trail Development</i>	Develop the recreational pedestrian and bike trails according to "Design and Maintenance Guidelines for Hard Surface Trails," with emphasis on recreational use.

Design Objective Maximize the effectiveness of the design of individual parks, by establishing design guidelines for interior functions.

Proposed Park Design Guidelines

<i>Visibility</i>	Maintain a clear view into and out of parking lots from all surrounding areas.
	Locate parking areas and young adult game areas, such as basketball courts, within clear view of the surrounding streets, to increase security.
	Locate parking in areas visible from adult activity area.

Park Design Guidelines

Functional Areas

Visually and physically separate young adult areas from children's playgrounds.

Develop adult areas, such as tennis courts, separate from but visible to children's playgrounds.

Develop picnic areas, such as tennis courts, separate from but visible to children's playgrounds.

Develop individual activity areas within clear view of larger activity areas. Avoid blocking visibility to activities due to extreme changes in elevation, which creates security problems.

Lighting

Locate lighting so that light does not intrude on nearby homes at night.

Post Park Rules

Clearly post park rules and regulations that are part of the City code. Refer to the code section.

Master Plan Objective

Design master plans for every park to incorporate all of the above design guidelines.

Options for Implementation

(See Proposed Park Design Guidelines above.)

Community Participation Objective

Request community participation in all park development decisions.

Options for Implementation

Include all capital improvements in the project listing of the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) before funding is identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as required by City charter.

Notify surrounding neighborhoods before plans are developed.

Include surrounding neighborhoods throughout the plan development process.

Submit first draft of plan for preliminary review and final draft for approval by the NPUs and Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG).

Citywide Design Priorities

Establish design priorities for parks Citywide.

Design a world-class park system.

Use park design guidelines for all park design projects.

Use the Department of the Interiors "Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes" for master plans of historic parks.

Park Design Guidelines

Protect natural resources.

Prepare park management plans for each park. Include staffing, maintenance schedules, equipment, training, quality control and annual cost.

Develop and program gymnasiums and natatoriums with the Atlanta Public Schools to maximize use of public funds.

Develop multi-use facilities that serve all age groups.

Link all parks with the greenway system through bike/jogging trails.

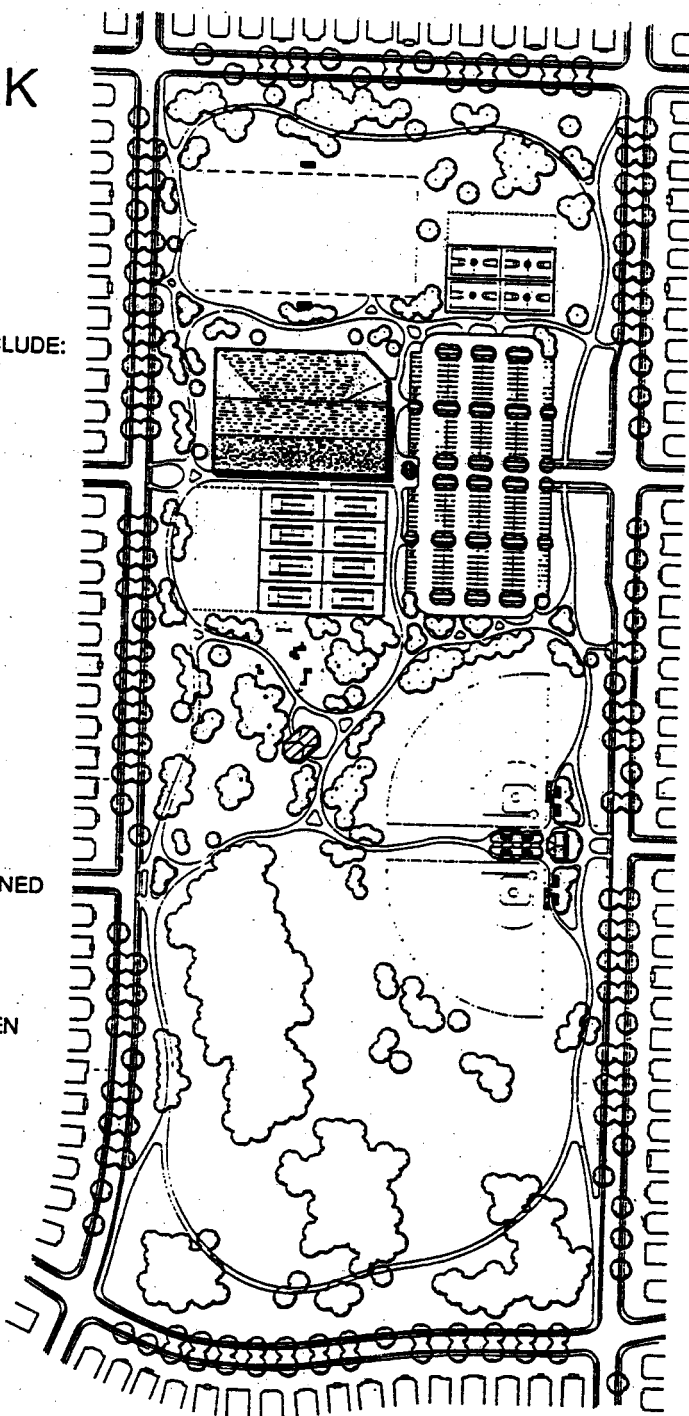
Provide accessibility to the physically challenged, wherever possible.

Protect existing open space. Build new facilities on land acquired for that purpose.

Figure 23

PROTOTYPE COMMUNITY PARK

- SIZE: 25-50 ACRES
- POPULATION SERVED: 8,000 TO 15,000
- SERVICE RADIUS: 2 MILES
- APPROPRIATE PARK FACILITIES MAY INCLUDE:
 - POOL
 - GYMNASIUM
 - RECREATION CENTER
 - LIGHTED COURT GAMES
 - TENNIS
 - BASKETBALL
 - VOLLEYBALL
 - MULTI-USE COURT
 - LIGHTED COURTS
 - LIGHTED PLAYFIELDS
 - BASEBALL
 - SOFTBALL
 - SOCCER/FOOTBALL
 - PICNIC AREA WITH SHELTER
 - PLAYGROUND
 - RESTROOMS
 - LIGHTED PARKING LOT
- FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR OLDER TEENAGERS AND ADULTS.
- COURTS AND PLAYING FIELDS ARE DESIGNED FOR LEAGUE PLAY.
- PARK IS BORDERED ON ALL SIDES BY ARTERIAL AND COLLECTOR STREETS.
- 1/3 OF PARK AREA IS UNDEVELOPED OPEN SPACE.
- IDEALLY, DEVELOP JOINTLY WITH A HIGH SCHOOL

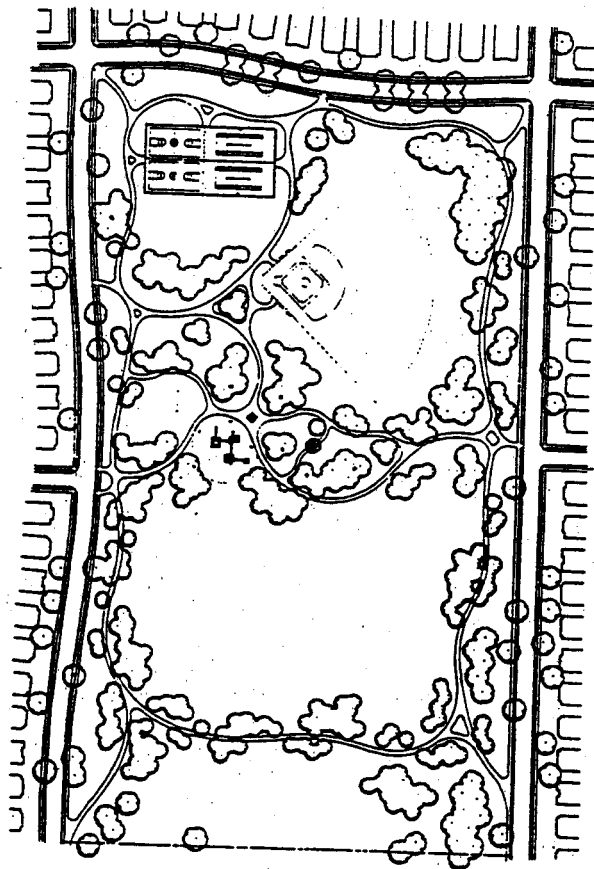


0 100 200
SCALE IN FEET

Figure 24

PROTOTYPE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

- SIZE: 10-25 ACRES
- POPULATION SERVED: 5,000 TO 8,000
- SERVICE RADIUS: 1/2 MILE
- APPROPRIATE PARK FACILITIES MAY INCLUDE:
 - COURT GAMES
 - TENNIS
 - BASKETBALL
 - VOLLEYBALL
 - MULTI-USE COURT
 - PLAYFIELDS
 - SOFTBALL
 - SOCCER / FOOTBALL
 - FREE PLAY
 - PICNIC AREA WITH GAZEBO OR SMALL SHELTER
 - PLAYGROUND
- BALL FIELDS DESIGNED FOR INFORMAL RATHER THAN LEAGUE GAMES.
- FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY.
- SERVES PATRONS WITHIN WALKING OR CYCLING DISTANCE.
- LOCATED ON COLLECTOR STREETS WITH HOMES THAT FACE INTO PARK.
- IDEALLY, DEVELOPED JOINTLY WITH ELEMENTARY OR MIDDLE SCHOOL.

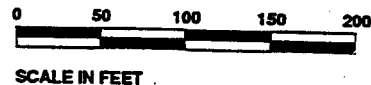
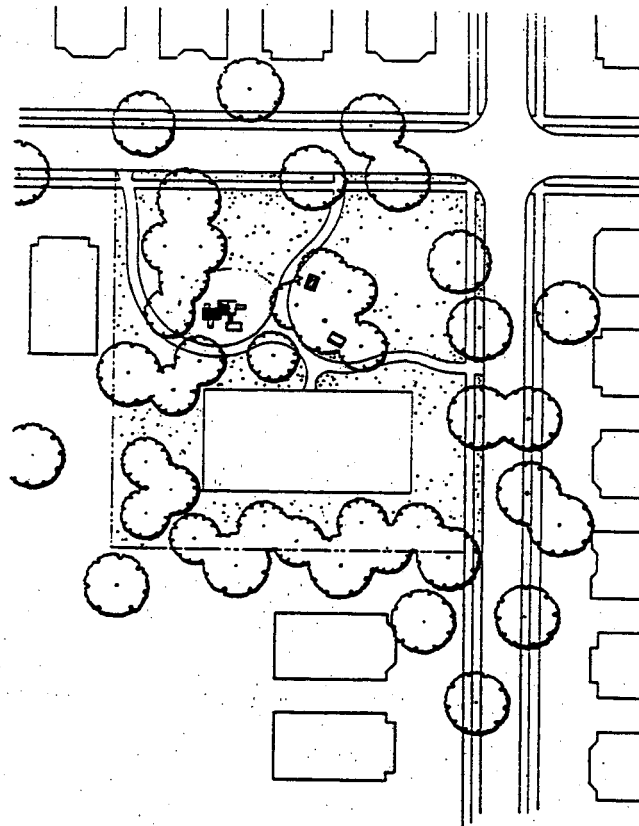


0 100 200
SCALE IN FEET

Figure 25

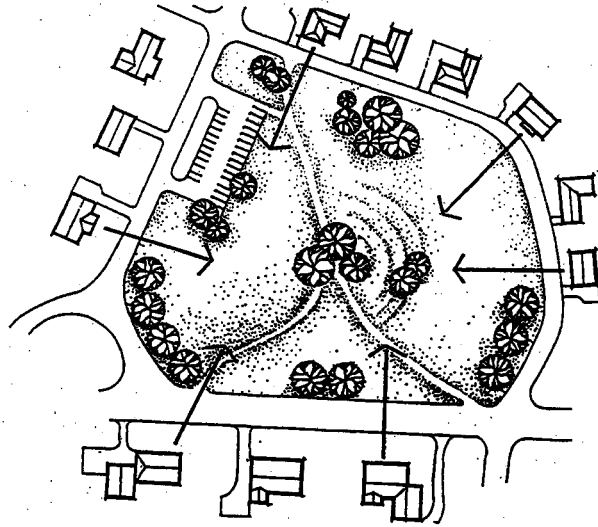
PROTOTYPE BLOCK PARK

- SIZE: 1/4 TO 2 ACRES
- POPULATION SERVED: UP TO 500
- SERVICE RADIUS: 1/8 MILE
- APPROPRIATE PARK FACILITIES MAY INCLUDE:
 - MULTI-USE COURT
 - FREE PLAY AREA
 - PLAYGROUND
 - PICNIC AREA
 - NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN
- MEETS THE NEEDS OF A SPECIFIC LOCALIZED AREA
- DESIGNED TO BE FLEXIBLE TO CHANGING NEEDS
- SERVES PATRONS WITHIN A 2-BLOCK WALKING DISTANCE.
- REQUIRES LITTLE SITE PREPARATION
- MAINTAINED BY A LOCAL ORGANIZATION
- LOCATED ADJACENT TO ONE OR MORE LOCAL STREETS.



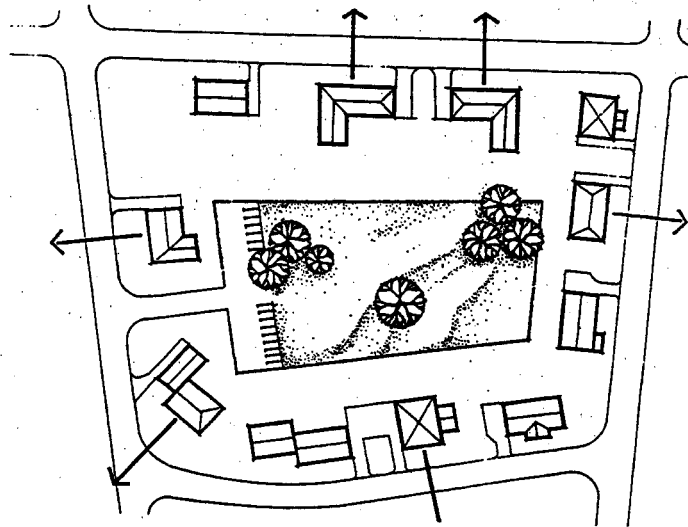
YES

Ensure that views into parks from surrounding homes create a stable, secure park and neighborhood



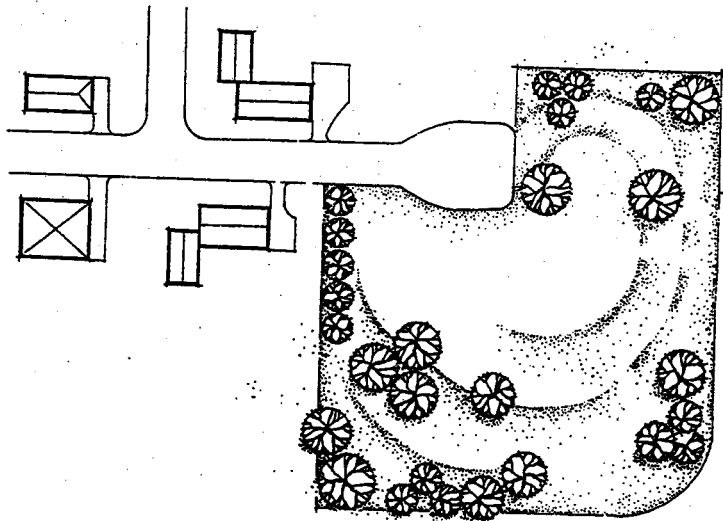
NO

Ensure that no homes are backing into parks creating unseen security problems



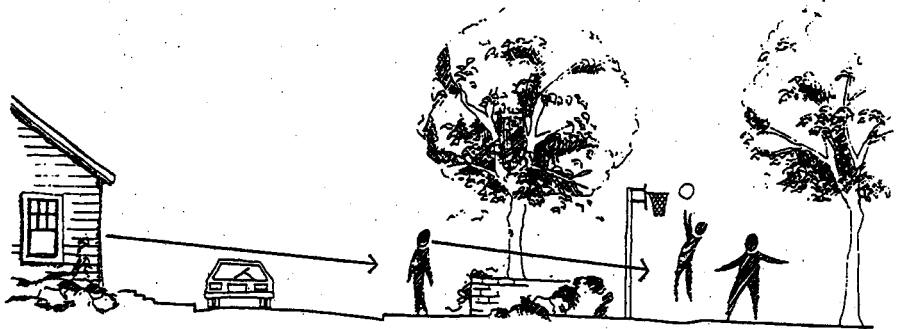
NO

Ensure that no streets dead end into parks creating security problems



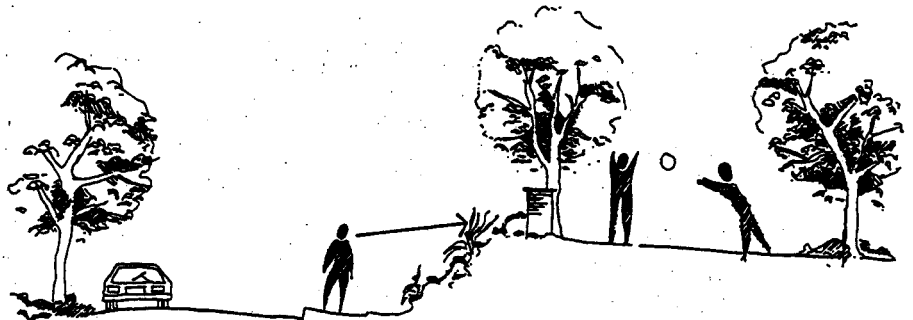
YES

Ensure that park security is improved by having unobstructed views into active areas



NO

Avoid obstructed views from street that encourage undesirable activities



NO

Eliminate and avoid barriers that restrict accessibility, reduce the service area and create security problems along edges

